

WILLIAM CAREY'S SIGNIFICANCE AS AN INDOLOGIST

The arrival of William Carey (1761–1834) in Bengal two centuries ago has widely been recognised as central to the development of the modern Christian missionary movement<sup>1</sup>. However, his contributions to the early development of Indology and his tenure of a professorship in Sanskrit and Bengali at the College of Fort William have received less attention. This paper assesses the significance of Carey's contributions in this field, examining his unfinished text and translation of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, his numerous grammars and dictionaries (regularly produced with the co-operation of paṇḍits) and his contribution to the development of Bengali prose writing, both through his own production of text books for use in the classroom and the founding of the first regular newspaper in Bengali by J.C. Marshman, son of his missionary colleague, Joshua Marshman. It also looks at the activities of the Baptist Mission Press, which was founded in the same year as the College of Fort William and played a major role in printing in Bengal during the first half of the 19th century, at the extent of Carey's familiarity with traditional Sanskrit literature (and the uses to which he put it) and at the significance of his varied activities for the scholarship of the time and assesses their lasting importance.

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1. This article was originally presented as a paper at the IXth World Sanskrit Conference held in Melbourne, Australia, in January 1994.

William Carey, a largely self-educated cobbler who had become a dissenting minister, arrived in the Hooghly and landed at Calcutta on 11th November 1793. He moved to Mudnabatty (Madnabati, Malda dist.) in June 1794 as the manager of George Udney's indigo factory there. From his second year at Madnabati Carey devoted a third of his working day to the study of Sanskrit and his early letters to the Baptist Missionary Society are full of references to his study of Bengali and Sanskrit. He was introduced to the magistrate at Mirzapore, H.T. Colebrooke, who had studied Sanskrit at Oxford and was able to give him considerable assistance. In 1796 Carey wrote: «I have read a considerable part of the Mahabharat, an epic Poem, written in most beautiful Language; and much upon a par with Homer, – and was it like his Iliad only considered as a great effort of human genius, I should think it one of the first productions in the world»<sup>2</sup>. Early in 1798 Carey reported that he had nearly finished translating a Sanskrit grammar and dictionary into English and that he was well on with compiling his own Sanskrit-Bengali-English dictionary<sup>3</sup>. Before leaving Madnabati he had translated almost all the Bible into Bengali.

On 10th January 1800 Carey moved to Serampore to join Marshman and Ward, who had arrived in 1799 and gone direct to Serampore<sup>4</sup>. On November 23, 1800, the day before the opening of the College of Fort William, Carey was called to Calcutta for a meeting with the Reverend Claudius Buchanan, Vice-Provost of the College. This meeting paved the way for a reconciliation between the government and the newly arrived Serampore missionaries and made it possible for Carey to be hired as a teacher in the college. He was appointed teacher of Bengali at Fort William College in April 1801 (at a monthly salary of 500 rupees), with Marāṭhī being added to his

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2. Letter of Carey to Andrew Fuller (dated Mudnabatty, April 23rd 1796), Original MS Northampton, P.A. I 299 (BMS Archives, 1792-1914, microfilm reel 36). This is quoted in GEORGE SMITH, *The Life of William Carey, D.D., shoemaker and missionary*, John Murray, London, 1885, p. 101, and elsewhere, as being a letter to Dr John Ryland.

3. BMS MSS, Carey to John Sutcliffe, dated Mudnabati, 16 Jan. 1798.

4. The group were forced to go to Serampore, a Danish possession, by the English East India Company's ban on missionaries entering its territories.

responsibilities from 1804. At Wellesley's request Carey, instead of Colebrooke, delivered the principal address in Sanskrit at the annual College Disputation at Fort William in September 1804. His Sanskrit grammar was published in full the year after Colebrooke's, in 1806, although a briefer, preliminary version had appeared in 1804. Following Colebrooke's resignation as the Sanskrit professor at the end of July 1806, Carey was appointed Professor of Sanskrit and Bengali from 1st January 1807 (and his salary doubled to 1000 rupees per month)<sup>5</sup>.

Carey was elected unanimously to the Asiatic Society on 8th January 1806 and served on its "Committee of Papers" until his death. Already in 1805 he had proposed to the Society and the Fort William College Council the publication of a series of Indian classics with text, English translation and notes; the response was an allowance of Rs. 300 monthly for translating and printing "the principal works to be found in the Sungskrit language, particularly those held sacred by the Hindoos, or those which may be most illustrative of their Manners, their History, or their Religion, including also the principal works of Science"<sup>6</sup>. In May 1805 Claudius Buchanan put the plan before fellow Orientalists and in 1806 Carey and Marshman took up the *Rāmāyana*, planning to publish it in nine or ten volumes. In 1807 Carey was awarded an honorary D.D. from Brown University, U.S.A. Professorships at Fort William College were abolished in 1830 and Carey (then 68) was given a pension of Rs 500. Carey died at Serampore on 9th June 1834.

When Carey was first appointed to the College of Fort William the most pressing problem was an almost complete lack of grammars

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5. Carey himself notes in a letter to John Sutcliffe (dated Calcutta, Feb. 11th, 1807, quoted from EUSTACE CAREY, *A Memoir of William Carey*, Jackson and Walford, London, 1936, p. 492): "Until lately I was teacher of three languages in the college, on a monthly salary of five hundred rupees per month; but, on the 1st of January past, I was, by the governor-general in council, appointed professor of the Sunscrit and Bengali languages, to which the Mahratta is added, though not specified in the official letter, with a salary of one thousand rupees per month".

6. This is the wording of the letter from Sir John Anstruther, President of the Asiatic Society, addressed to other learned societies, as printed in the "Advertisement" in *The Ramayunu of Valmeeki*, with a prose translation and explanatory notes by WILLIAM CAREY and JOSHUA MARSHMAN, vol. I, Serampore, 1806, pp. i-ii.

and textbooks, so he brought together a team of paṇḍits to remedy this. He encouraged the Bengali paṇḍits to prepare prose texts of various kinds. He insisted that these paṇḍits should not know English but should know Sanskrit, declaring for instance in a note dated 6th March 1827: «The circumstance of their having a smattering of English is rather a disadvantage than otherwise, as the vanity of imitating English composition almost invariably leads them to adopt a similar phraseology which is diametrically opposed to the proper formation of Bengali sentences»<sup>7</sup>.

Carey's own first textbook was his Bengali grammar, completed in 1801, of which four editions appeared within twenty years<sup>8</sup>. The first edition followed Nathaniel Halhed's *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* of 1778 quite closely, since Carey needed to produce something quickly. As Carey explained at the time:

I therefore set about compiling a grammar, which is now half printed. I got Ram Boshu to compose a history of one of their kings, the first prose book ever written in the Bengali language; which we are also printing. Our pundit has, also, nearly translated the Sunscrit fables, one or two of which brother Thomas sent you, which we are also going to publish. These, with Mr Foster's [sic] vocabulary, will prepare the way to reading their poetical books; so that I hope this difficulty will be gotten through. ... I am also appointed teacher of the Sunscrit language; and though no students have yet entered in that class, yet I must prepare

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7. Quotation from SISIR KUMAR DAS, *Sahibs and Munshis: An Account of the College of Fort William*, New Delhi, 1978, p.65. However, Swapan Majumdar claims ("Literature and Literary Life in Old Calcutta", *Calcutta: The Living City*, vol.1, pp. 106-117, on pp. 108-9): «Needless to say, the Fort William model of prose was far different from the one which had been growing indigenously. The vocabulary was based on classical stems and reflexes as much as loan words from various sources, while an English pattern of syntax was superimposed all along».

8. *A Grammar of the Bengalee Language*, Serampore, 1801 (2nd edn, with additions, 1805; 4th edn, with additions, 1818). The process of improvement continued, as shown by his remarks in the "Preface to the third edition" (as printed on p.vii of the fourth edition): «Since the first and second editions of this work were published, the writer has had an opportunity of studying this language with more attention, and of examining its structure more closely than he had done before. The result of his studies he has endeavoured to give in the following pages, which, on account of the variations from the former editions, may be esteemed a new work».

for it. I am, therefore, writing a grammar of that language, which I must also print, if I should be able to get through with it, and perhaps a dictionary, which I began some years ago<sup>9</sup>.

In keeping with its function, the first edition was a relatively basic textbook, giving the rules briefly and simply, without the comparisons and digressions that distinguish Halhed's work. While acknowledging his debt to Halhed, Carey adds that he introduced into his own work many distinctions and observations omitted by his predecessor. The second edition, with additions, published in 1805, was a more original effort. The grammar covers the Bengali alphabet and the combination of its letters, the declension of substantives and formation of derivative nouns, the inflection of adjectives and pronouns, and the verbal conjugations, as well as providing lists and descriptions of the indeclinable verbs, adverbs and prepositions; it closes with a brief treatment of the syntax.

Also in 1801, Carey edited a reader for the students of Bengali called the *Kathopakathan* or *Dialogues intended to facilitate the acquiring of the Bengalee Language*<sup>10</sup>. This is more than just a text book, compensating for the limited treatment of syntax in his grammar by illustrating a wide variety of idioms and phrases; it is a social document, comprising a collection of lively and racy dialogues between different groups of people – merchants, fishermen, women, beggars, day-labourers, and other common folk – each distinct by their social status and occupation and linguistic behaviour, and as such it is the first work by a European to venture outside the classical culture. As Carey acknowledges, much of it was written by the Fort

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9. Letter to Dr John Ryland of Bristol (dated Serampore, June 15, 1801), quoted in EUSTACE CAREY, *Memoir*, p. 454.

10. This work is also known as *Colloquies* – the first edition lacked a title page, hence the variety of names (a second edition was published at Serampore in 1806 and a third in 1818). A similar publication was the *Itihasmala*, or a collection of stories in the Bengalee language, Serampore, 1812; Sisirkumar Das rather dismissively says of this: «It was for a long time regarded as Carey's work but though it still passes under his name it was probably not written by him. At most he is now regarded only as the compiler of the stories which were collected and written by his Bengali colleagues». (*Early Bengali Prose: Carey to Vidyāsāgar*, Calcutta, 1966, p. 68).

William paṇḍits. Carey's own prose style was no doubt rather crude and stilted; indeed, «from a purely linguistic point of view one of his more interesting contributions was the creation – through his Bengali translations of the Bible – of a specialized type of Bengali prose known as “Christian Bengali” which despite (or, perhaps, because of) its non-idiomatic nature is still in liturgical use in West Bengal»<sup>11</sup>. However, his great contribution to the development of Bengali lay in his use of it in ways and for purposes not hitherto envisaged, including in due course both journalism and higher education. He thus led the way for the great flowering of Bengali literature that peaked about a century later.

Mṛtyuñjaya Vidyālaṅkāra, the chief paṇḍit of Bengali and Sanskrit under Carey in the College of Fort William, was a Chattopadhyaya brāhman, born in 1762 in Midnapore. As well as being Carey's teacher (giving him two to three hours tuition daily when he was in Calcutta and probably being depicted with him in a portrait by Robert Home), he assisted him with several publications, including perhaps the *Kathopakathan*. Mṛtyuñjaya wrote four works between 1801 and 1814; the first, *Batrisi Śiṅhāsan*, appeared in 1802 and is a version of the tales associated with King Vikramāditya<sup>12</sup>.

Carey's monumental Bengali dictionary was the outcome of nearly thirty years' work by the time it was completed in 1825. The

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11. I quote from a letter from W. L. Smith (25 November 1985). We may also note the evaluation in “Remarks on the Character and Labours of Dr Carey, as an Oriental Scholar and Translator”, by H. H. Wilson (printed in EUSTACE CAREY, *Memoir*, pp.587-610; quotation from pp. 588-9), «although he must concede to Halhed the credit of first reducing to rule the construction of the Bengali tongue, yet by his own grammar and dictionary, and other useful rudimentary publications, Dr Carey may claim the merit of having raised it from the condition of a rude and unsettled dialect to the character of a regular and permanent form of speech, possessing something of a literature, and capable, through its intimate relation to the Sanscrit, of becoming a refined and comprehensive vehicle for the diffusion of sound knowledge and religious truth».

12. *The Butrisha-Singhasan* by MRITYUNJAYA VIDYALANKAR, Serampore, 1802 (2nd edn, 1808). This work, “the 32-imaged throne”, was one of the early Fort William Bengali textbooks, translated from the Sanskrit at Carey's instigation. Others in Bengali included *Raja Pratapaditya Charita* by RAM RAM BOSHOO, Serampore, 1801, *Lippi Mala, or the Bracelet of Writing* by RAM RAM BASU, Serampore, 1802, and *Raja Valli* by MRITYUNJOY VIDYALANKAR.

first volume was printed in 1815 but the type adopted made it excessively bulky and so it was reprinted in 1818; the second and third volumes appeared in 1825<sup>13</sup>. These three volumes total more than two thousand quarto pages and contain about 85,000 words; as H.H. Wilson remarks, this is «a number that equally demonstrates the copiousness of the language, and the industry of the compiler»<sup>14</sup>. In 1827-8 J.C. Marshman published an abridged version, containing around 25,000 words after elimination of many of the compound forms and those beginning with *a-* privative<sup>15</sup>; this passed through several editions.

Carey was similarly a pioneer in the study of Sanskrit. Although the first and only volume of H.T. Colebrooke's Sanskrit grammar was published in 1805, Carey's Sanskrit grammar was the first complete version to be printed and according to the Supreme Council of Bengal, «The Merits of this Work are (so) well known that no other reason need be assigned for its Patronage»<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, a substantial part

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13. *A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language, in which the words are traced to their origin, and their various meanings given*, vol. I, pp. xi, 944, Serampore: printed at the Mission Press, 1815, 2nd edn, 1818; vol. II, Parts I and II, Serampore: printed at the Mission Press, 1825. According to M. Siddiq Khan, "William Carey and the Serampore Books, (1800-1834)" *Libri* 11, 1961, pp. 197-280 (quoting p. 274), "On publication of 2nd vol. in 1825, unsold copies of vol. I of 1818 had their imprint dates altered to 1825. Therefore both these dates appear in copies of the work of the same edition. Vol. I was not reprinted in 1825".

14. "Remarks", p. 599.

15. In a letter to Dr Ryland, dated December 10, 1811, Carey himself had already remarked: «I am now printing a dictionary of the Bengalee, which will be pretty large, for I have got to 256 pages quarto, and I am not nearly through the first letter. That letter, however, begins more words than any two others» (quoted from EUSTACE CAREY, *Memoir*, p. 519; cf. SMITH, *Life*, pp. 248-9).

16. C.R.O. MSS. "Bengal Public Consultations", 5-26 March 1813: Proceedings at a Council presided over by Lord Minto at Fort William, 19 March 1813, as quoted by KENNETH INGHAM, *Reformers in India, 1793-1833*, Cambridge University Press, 1956, p. 101. Colebrooke himself in his grammar (*A Grammar of the Sanscrit Language*, volume I, Calcutta: printed at the Honorable Company's Press, 1805) in effect concedes that Carey's grammar makes his redundant: «As the entire work will exceed the bounds of a single volume, a convenient break has been chosen to close the first; and a few remarks will be now prefixed to it, since a considerable time may elapse, before the second volume be completed. I have the less scruple, in pausing upon this work, to devote my attention to other duties, because the deficient part of it may be supplied by the grammars, which Mr Forster and Mr Carey will severally publish».

of Carey's grammar had already been published in 1804 and the full work in 1806<sup>17</sup>, so the priority rests with Carey's work, which equally was compiled independently of Colebrooke's, despite the close association between the two at this period. In his dedication to Lord Wellesley, in the 1806 edition, Carey terms it "the first elementary work in the Sunskrit language yet published". The 1804 edition contained the first three books, of which the first treats of the letters and of their euphonic combinations, the second covers the declension of substantives, adjectives and pronouns, and the third deals with verbal conjugations. The 1806 edition then adds "Book IV. Of the formation of words", dealing both with nominal compounds and with gender, "Book V.", which contains one chapter on syntax and then several exercises, comprising the first section of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the first three chapters of St Matthew's Gospel, and the *Īśa Upaniṣad*, and "An Appendix, containing a list of the Dhatoos, or roots, of the Sunskrit Language".

The general plan of the work is to collect the main rules on each topic into separate sections, and then to add the examples. The rules are given to a considerable extent in the technical language of the grammarians followed, whom Carey acknowledges as Vopadeva, Kramadeśvara, Pāṇini and others in the Preface (where he also acknowledges the assistance received from Mṛtyuñjaya Vidyālaṅkāra and Rāmanātha Vācaspati, "who have been always ready to contribute to this work, and to whose zeal and abilities he is happy to bear this

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17. *A Grammar of the Sunskrit Language, composed from the works of the most esteemed Hindoo Grammarians. To which are added, examples for the exercise of the student, and a complete list of the dhatoos, or roots*, by WILLIAM CAREY, teacher of the Bengalee and Sunskrit languages, in the College of Fort William. Serampore, printed at the Mission Press, 1804. (This edition has no prolegomena, contents page or introduction and ends on p. 568 [actually numbered 546, whereas the preceding page is correctly 567]). The title page of the 1806 edition omits the word "Hindoo" (perhaps a mark of increased respect for the indigenous grammatical tradition) and describes Carey as "Teacher of the Sunskrit, Bengalee, and Mahratta Languages"; after the title page and its reverse come a two-page dedication "To the most noble Richard Marquis Wellesley, K.P.", a preface (pp. i-vii) and eight unnumbered pages on the *devanāgarī* script, before pages 1-[568] of the 1804 edition. Books IV and V follow on pp. 569-906, while the Appendix and Index are given separate pagination (and for the Appendix a separate title page on [p. 1], the Appendix totalling 108 pages and the Index 24); the volume concludes with nine unnumbered pages of errata.



testimony"). Indeed, in 1807 *The Moogdhubodha, or Grammar of the Sungskrita Language*, by Vopa Deva was published – in Bengali script – from Serampore and use of this alongside Carey's grammar would have clarified any obscurities. One reason for the fact that Carey's grammar has fallen into relative oblivion is that the *Mugdhabodha* was only current in Bengal and this limited the appeal of his work. Nevertheless, Wilson's opinion was that: «Carey's Sanscrit grammar is a work of very great merit; and in the immense accumulation of useful examples and illustrations which it affords, especially in the paradigmas of the verbs, and in the development of derivative nouns, it is of invaluable assistance both to the beginner and to the more advanced student»<sup>18</sup>.

Following Sir William Jones' famous address of 1786, it seems generally, though mistakenly, to have been assumed that all the languages of India were Indo-European, being derived from Sanskrit. Thus in the 1806 preface to his Sanskrit grammar, Carey states (p.iv): «The Hindoosthanee and the Tamul, with the languages of Gujerat and Maluyala, are evidently derived from the Sungskrit, but the two former are greatly [sic] mixed with foreign words. The Bengalee, Orissa, Mahratta, Kurnatu, and Tilingu languages are almost wholly composed of Sungskrit words». This error was corrected a decade later by F.W. Ellis, a member of the Madras Civil Service, and Carey almost immediately took the point further, writing:

In our prosecution of it (*i.e.* our object), we have found, our ideas relative to the number of languages which spring from the Sungskrit, were far from being accurate. The fact is, that in this point of view, India is to this day almost an unexplored country. That eight or nine languages had sprung from that great philological root, the Sungskrit, we well knew. But we imagined that the Tamul, the Kurnata, the Telinga, the Guzrattee, the Orissa, the Bengalee, the Mahratta, the Punjabee, and the Hindoostanee, comprised nearly all the collateral branches springing from the Sungskrit language; ...

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18. "Remarks", p. 593; cf. also his "Notice of European Grammars and Lexicons of the Sanskrit Language", *Essays Analytical, Critical, and Philological*, III, London, 1864.

But although we entered on our work with these ideas, we were ultimately constrained to relinquish them<sup>19</sup>.

This passage is then followed by specimens from 33 Indian languages and a detailed comparison of them, amounting to the first attempt at a systematic survey of the Indian languages.

The preface to his Sanskrit grammar also includes a brief overview of the different classes of Sanskrit literature:

The Hindoo writings are numerous, and treat of various subjects. The Vedu, confessedly the most ancient of them, is partly devotional and partly philosophical. The Smritis treat of religious ceremonies, civil law, and the various duties of life, and in the Pooranus the doctrine of the Vedu is clothed in a new dress, and accommodated to popular practice. ... The Hindoos have also many books upon grammar, logic, metaphysics, astronomy, medicine, and other sciences. Their poems, not esteemed sacred, are numerous, and some of them are said to possess a considerable share of merit.

His comments subsequently on the characteristics of the language are also worth noting:

Much of the beauty of the Indian languages consists in the use of compound words. These abound in the Sungskrit, and are formed with the greatest facility. The rules by which they are formed are clearly laid down by the Hindoo grammarians, and extend to all the minutiae of this interesting branch of grammar<sup>20</sup>.

As with Bengali, Carey was also concerned to make available suitable texts for students learning Sanskrit. In 1804, an edition of the *Hitopadeśa*, accompanied by an episode abridged from the *Daśakumāracarita* and Bhartṛhari's *Śatakas* appeared; this is variously ascribed to Carey and to Colebrooke and fairly clearly they both

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19. *Sixth Memoir*, dated March 1816, on the state of their translation work to the Baptist Missionary Society, signed by all three Serampore missionaries, Carey, Marshman and Ward (quoted from G.A. GRIERSON, "The Early Publications of the Serampore Missionaries", *Indian Antiquary* 32, 1903, pp. 241-254).

20. Quotations from p. i and p. iv.

had a hand in it<sup>21</sup>. However, Colebrooke in his extensive signed introduction, indicates that Carey was the editor and undertook publication at the request of the College Council. Six manuscripts were collated for the *Hitopadeśa* and three for the *Śatakas*, although the abridgement of the *Daśakumāracarita* was based on a single manuscript. Colebrooke's English translation of the *Amarakośa* was also published at Serampore in 1808 and was corrected for the press by Carey<sup>22</sup>.

Even before his Sanskrit grammar was complete, Carey was planning his next scholarly activities in Sanskrit, as recorded in one of his letters:

The college and the Asiatic society have agreed to allow us a stipend of three hundred rupees per month, to assist us in translating and printing the Sanscrit writings, accounted sacred or scientific. We have begun the Ramayunu, the most ancient poem in the Sanscrit language. Sir John Anstruther showed me, to-day, a letter which he, as president of the Asiatic society, and by desire of the college, intends to address to all the learned societies and bodies in Europe, to recommend the work. ... I translate into Bengali, and from Sanscrit into English, viz., the Ramayunu. I have also begun an attempt at translating the Veds<sup>23</sup>.

Anstruther's letter was printed in full in the "Advertisement" prefixed to the first volume of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and begins (pp. i-ii):

The Asiatic Society, and the College of Fort William, being desirous of promoting the knowledge of the Literature of India, and, at the same time, of disclosing to the learned in Europe the stores which lie hid in the Ancient Languages of India, have accepted a proposal which has

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21. *Hitopadeśa, or Salutory Instruction, in the original Sanscrit*, Serampore, 1804. The introduction by H.T. Colebrooke is on pp. iii-xv. The Serampore Mission Press also published two different translations of the *Hitopadeśa* into Bengali, one by Goluk Natha Pundit in 1802 and the other by Mrityunjoy Vidyalkar in 1808.

22. *Cōsha, or Dictionary of the Sanscrit Language*, by AMERA SINHA, with an English Interpretation, and Annotations, by H.T. COLEBROOKE, Esq., Serampore, 1808. This was another Fort William textbook. Colebrooke also explicitly acknowledges assistance from Carey, along with W. Roxburgh, F. Buchanan and W. Hunter, on the names of plants and animals (p. 11).

23. Letter to John Sutcliffe, dated Calcutta, August 22, 1805 (quoted EUSTACE CAREY, *Memoir*, pp. 473-4).

been made to them by the Brethren of the Mission at Serampore, of translating successively the principal works to be found in the *Sungskrit* Language, particularly those held sacred by the Hindoos, or those which may be most illustrative of their Manners, their History, or their Religion, including also the principal works of Science.

It is proposed to print the works in the *Original Sungskrit*, accompanied by a Translation as nearly literal as the genius of the two languages will admit. The advantage of such a plan, both as it tends to preserve the works of the learned of ancient India from perishing, and as it tends to open Indian Science, Antiquity, and Religion to the Learned in Europe, in the mode the best calculated to enable them to appreciate their value, are sufficiently obvious. It is equally obvious, however, that such a work cannot be undertaken by an individual with any hope of completing it, and still less with any hope of emolument. The College of Fort William, and the Asiatic Society, have been fortunate in finding a body of men not only willing to undertake, but qualified to perform the work, with a degree of vigour and permanency not to be hoped for from individual exertion.

Three volumes appeared between 1806 and 1810<sup>24</sup>. This represents quite remarkable progress, when account is taken of the small amount of time that Carey, who had the main hand in it, was able to devote to the task. It is commonly stated that nothing further appeared and that the fire which destroyed the Serampore printing works on 11th March 1812 had burnt up both the text being printed and the manuscript of further parts. For example, George Smith records: «A fourth volume was consumed in the great fire which destroyed the printing-office and press in 1813 [sic], and was never published», adding in a footnote: «Thirty years after, on clearing out the store-room of the press which succeeded that of 1813, we found imperfect proofs of the fourth volume, and made them over to Mr. J. Talboys

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24. *The Ramayunu of Valmeeki, in the original Sungskrit*. With a prose translation, and explanatory notes, by WILLIAM CAREY and JOSEPH MARSHMAN. Volume I containing the first book, Serampore, 1806. Volume II containing part of the second book, Serampore, 1809. Vol. III containing the latter part of the second book, Serampore, 1810. The translation only of the *Bālakāṇḍa* was reprinted two years later in England (Dunstable, J.W. Morris, 1808, xii, 449 pp.).

Wheeler for his *History of India from the Earliest Ages*<sup>25</sup>. However, at least one copy of a substantial part of the fourth volume has survived and is in the Indian Institute Library in Oxford. This lacks a title page but the first page is headed: «The Ramayuna. *Urunya Kandū*. Book III. Section 1»; it contains the first sixtyfour sargas of the Aranyakāṇḍa in its numeration, with the first verse corresponding to 2.108.1 of the Critical Edition and the last page containing four ślokaś of its sarga 64, corresponding to 3.51.1-3 (including 1011\* and 5ab)<sup>26</sup>.

The text which Carey and Marshman printed was not, as might perhaps have been expected, that of the Bengali recension but was basically that of the Tilaka commentary. For example, a number of the readings exclusive to Dt1 of the Critical Edition are found in their text (*raghupuṅgavaḥ* at 1.50.1c, *prajāś caiva* at 2.3.27d, *kāṅkṣiṇaḥ* and *āgatya* at 2.3.29b+c, *tadā* at 2.108.1b, to cite just a few). However, it does also contain occasional readings attributed in the Critical Edition only to Bengali or Maithili manuscripts. Another interesting feature of the text is the regular use of a subscript dot to indicate word division when this is not apparent because of *sandhi*; I have found the same practice occasionally in manuscripts, where no doubt such punctuation was similarly added for the guidance of Europeans. The translation is not particularly literary, endeavouring to be as literal as is practical, and there are occasional signs of misunderstanding of the text. For the explanatory notes, they seem in many instances to have been indebted to paṇḍits for the information, of which a particularly clear example is the way that *mleccha* is merely transliterated as “Mleechas” and glossed “The inhabitants of the countries where there is no distinction of cast, and where beef is eaten” (vol. II, p. 18).

Wilson also records that Carey prepared for press some translations of Sāṅkhya treatises which were never published, but Grierson records as one of the Serampore publications the second edition in 1821 of the *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya*, which may correspond to

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25. *Life*, p. 229, with fn.

26. I am most grateful to my wife, Mary Brockington, for locating this volume and for these details of its contents, as well as for various other bibliographical assistance with this paper.

this<sup>27</sup>. Another project which also perished in the printing-house fire was Carey's idea of a dictionary giving the etymology and synonyms of words in the different languages derived from Sanskrit with equivalent Greek and Hebrew terms. Only some leaves of the manuscript of this project are still preserved in the Carey Library at Serampore<sup>28</sup>.

Growing involvement by the East India Company with the Marāṭhās brought the addition of Marāṭhī to the curriculum at the College of Fort William in 1804, with Carey commissioned to teach it. He immediately set about the production of the necessary basic textbooks. He had heard of a Marāṭhī grammar written in Portuguese long before but was unable to procure a copy and so started again from scratch. His Marāṭhī grammar was published in 1805 and his Marāṭhī dictionary five years later<sup>29</sup>. The dictionary, which contains around ten thousand entries, was compiled with the help of the paṇḍit Vaijanāth. Somewhat later, in 1814-15, Carey published a collection of tales in Marāṭhī, comprising *Siṃhāsanabattisī*, *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa*.

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27. Wilson, "Remarks", p.598, and Grierson, "Early Publications", p. 254, where he also notes: «No trace of 1st Edn». On the other hand, Khan lists it as published in 1808 but with the note «No trace of copies of 1st edn. According to the Bengali Scholar Sajani Kanta Das this was never completed, but H.H. Wilson states that Carey had made the treatise on the Sankhya system of metaphysics ready for the press». (*op. cit.* p. 266).

28. Carey refers to it in a letter to Dr Ryland, dated December 10, 1811, along with his other linguistic activities (quoted in EUSTACE CAREY, *Memoir*, p. 519 – a slightly different version in SMITH, *Life*, pp. 248-9):

«The necessity which lies upon me of acquiring so many languages, obliges me to study and write out the grammar of each of them, and to attend closely to all their irregularities and peculiarities. I have therefore published grammars of three of them, the Sungskrit, the Bengallee, and the Mahratta. I intend also to publish grammars of the others, and have now in the press a grammar of the Telinga language, and another of that of the Shikhs, and have begun one of the Orissa language. To these I intend in time to add those of the Kurnata, the Kashmeera, and Nepala, and perhaps the Assam languages. ... I am contemplating, and indeed have been long collecting materials for a universal dictionary of the oriental languages, derived from the Sungskrit, of which that language is to be the ground-work, and to give the corresponding Greek and Hebrew words».

29. *A Grammar of the Mahratta Language, to which are added dialogues in familiar subjects*, Serampore, printed at the Mission Press, 1805, viii, 152, 49 pp., and *A Dictionary of the Mahratta Language*, Serampore, 1810, vii, 652 pp.; the grammar reached a third edition in 1825.

He also published grammars of Pañjābī, Telugu, and Kannaḍa<sup>30</sup>. The first two were the first European grammars of the language and, although his Kannaḍa grammar was published after F.W. Ellis's work, it was compiled in ignorance of it. The assistance of paṇḍits was obviously essential to their compilation and, for example, in the preface to the Telugu grammar Carey wrote (p.ii): «The writer of this work is happy to acknowledge the assistance he has received in writing it, from Sooba Shastri, one of the Pundits of the Sudder Dewanee Adawlut»; nevertheless, their publication was certainly a considerable achievement. The preface to the Pañjābī grammar contains brief notes on Sikhism and we also know that Carey prepared a summary of the contents of the first ninetytwo hymns of the *Ādi Granth* with the help of a Sikh named Ajnaram<sup>31</sup>. Carey's achievements in this area were clearly the reason why he was also engaged by the Presidency Government to correct and publish the grammar and dictionary in the Bhutanese language compiled by F.C.G. Schroeter<sup>32</sup>.

Carey's scholarly activities and his concerns as a missionary were never entirely separated. Having witnessed a widow-burning near the village of Noya Serai in the spring of 1799<sup>33</sup>, Carey set about investigating its prevalence in 1803 and the Serampore missionaries under his leadership then implored the government to forbid the rite by law. Carey used his position at the College of Fort William to collect from its paṇḍits various texts from the *dharmasāstras* on which the practice of *satī* was allegedly based; Carey was no doubt himself familiar with Sir William Jones's translation of the *Manusmṛti*, as well as having

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30. *A Grammar of the Punjabee Language*, Serampore, printed at the Mission Press, 1812, iv, 99 pp.; *A Grammar of the Telinga Language*, Serampore, printed at the Mission Press, 1814, iii, 186 pp.; and *A Grammar of the Kurnata Language*, Serampore, 1817, iii, 140 pp.

31. Carey records this in a letter which also asks for a fee of five gold mohurs for Ajnaram (Proceedings of the Council of the College of Fort William; Indian Archives, Delhi, Home Miscellaneous File 569 p. 193).

32. FRIEDRICH CHRISTIAN GOTTHELF SCHROETER, *A Dictionary of the Bhotanta or Boutan Language*, printed from a manuscript copy made by F.C.G. Schroeter, edited by J. MARSHMAN, to which is prefixed *A Grammar of the Bhotania Language* by F.C.G. Schroeter, edited by W. CAREY, Serampore, 1826.

33. Carey described the occasion in a letter to Ryland, dated Mudnabatty, 1st April 1799. Noya Serai, he notes, is marked on Rennel's map as Niaserai.

some acquaintance with the original texts. The missionaries placed all these documents, together with the statistics of *satī* they had compiled, in the hands of George Udney – a member of the Supreme Council and an ardent abolitionist. Wellesley's government in response asked the judges of the Nizamat Adalat to ascertain how far the practice was based on Hindu religious views. In 1817, Mr̥tyuñjaya Vidyāṅkāra, chief paṇḍit at Fort William, declared that the *satī* rite was not an ordinance of Hindu law and that a woman's burning herself was an unworthy act. A year later Rammohun Roy made use of Mr̥tyuñjaya's interpretation of Hindu texts on *satī* in his opposition to the practice. On 5th December 1829, a Sunday, William Carey received from the Governor General, Lord William Bentinck, Regulation XVII (promulgated the previous day), which declared that the burning or burying alive of widows was culpable homicide, to translate into Bengali, which he did that same day<sup>34</sup>.

The concerns over *satī* were also reflected in the second edition of William Ward's *View of the History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindus*<sup>35</sup>, which contained a chapter setting out the Baptists' figures for *satīs* in the Calcutta area, together with extracts from the *dharmaśāstras* and accounts of some of the more horrific cases of widow-burning known to the writer. Carey probably assisted William Ward in this work, especially in the abstracts and translations of the philosophical works included. The same appeal to scholarship is found in the Baptist periodical, the *Friend of India*, which at regular intervals published learned articles undermining the whole basis of *satī* and demanding its abolition.

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34. As F. DEAVILLE WALKER, *William Carey, missionary pioneer and statesman*, Church Missionary Society, London, 1926, p.310, puts it: «Springing to his feet and throwing off his black coat he cried, "No church for me to-day... If I delay an hour to translate and publish this, many a widow's life may be sacrificed", he said. By evening the task was finished».

35. Ward's *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos, including Translations from their Principal Works* was first published in 1811 by the Mission Press at Serampore, the first volume having been printed in 1806 and the work completed in four volumes five years later. Later editions, with changed title, were published in 1815, 1817-20, 1822 (3 volumes) and a one-volume abridgement edited by W.O. Simpson in 1863.



The first Bengali periodical, *Digdarśan*, edited by John Clark Marshman (1794-1877), appeared in February and the first issue of the English-language *Friend of India* in April 1818. The Serampore missionaries seem to have been testing government reactions with the *Digdarśan* and when there was no objection brought out the first Bengali weekly, *Samācar Darpan*, also edited by J.C. Marshman, the next month, on 23rd May 1818; from 11th July 1829 this became bilingual. The novelty of the *Samācar Darpan* ensured its popularity and it was published continuously until 1841. The first Bengali weekly edited by a Bengali was also published in 1818: Gangakishore Bhattacharya's *Bangal Gejeti*. Various competitors to the *Samācar Darpan* soon appeared: the *Sambād Kaumudī* (1821, financed by Rammohun Roy), *Samācar Candrikā* (1822) and *Sambād Timirnasak* (1823); however, the *Darpan* remained the leading Bengali paper.

As an integral part of their publishing plans, the Serampore trio had set up what was in effect India's first self-contained industrial complex at Serampore, comprising a type foundry, printing presses and a paper works. Under Carey's supervision Panchanan Karmakar cast a new Devanāgarī type containing all the compound letters and variant forms for other letters to produce a more cursive appearance; despite its rather clumsy appearance now, it was to have a significant influence on the later casting of Devanāgarī fonts<sup>36</sup>. William Ward, a qualified printer, was in charge of the press and rapidly made it the leading printer in non-Roman fonts; an obvious example of this is the fact that all the Asiatic Society's early publications were printed at Serampore, while the statistics are equally impressive: 212,000 copies of books in forty languages produced up to 1832. The press was for-

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36. Nikhil Sarkar ("Printing and the Spirit of Calcutta", *Calcutta: The Living City*, vol. 1, pp. 128-136, quoting p. 129) comments: «In their 1807 *Memoir Relative to the Translations* (of the Bible), they report that "the providence of God brought to us the very artist who had wrought with Wilkins". His name is given in many other accounts as Panchanan Karmakar (?-1803/4), a native of Shrirampur. Recent research has also brought out the contribution of Joseph Shepherd, a talented engraver who died in Calcutta in 1787 at the early age of thirty-four. On his death-bed he told John Gilchrist, the compiler of *A Dictionary, English and Hindoostani* (1787) that he has "assisted Mr Wilkins from the first". There is much evidence of Shepherd's skill to bear out this claim». Cf. also KHAN, *op. cit.* pp. 246-253.

mally closed down in 1837, in fact merging with the Baptist Mission Press in Calcutta (active from 1818 till 1970). Paper-making at Serampore began in 1809, although the real breakthrough came with the introduction of steam power in 1820 (the first use of steam in India for any manufacturing process). The printing office was totally destroyed by fire on 11th March 1812; the loss amounted to £12,000 in buildings, paper, books, presses and founts of type – as well as many manuscripts, including that of the rest of the translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. However, production was resumed within weeks.

Serampore College was founded in 1818 by Carey, Marshman and Ward. Its aim was twofold: to provide a theological education for students intending to enter the Christian ministry, and to provide further education in arts and social sciences for non-Christians in a curriculum characterised as “Eastern Literature and Western Science”, with Bengali as the medium of instruction and English studied only by the more advanced students. The majority of Bengalis aspiring to higher education were still at this period thinking in “Orientalist” terms; the “Anglicist” movement had only just come into existence and its flagship, the Hindu College, was not at first a particular success. However by the 1830s English was being much more regularly used in the College and the early emphasis on Sanskrit had largely disappeared, in response to changing views in the community at large.

Meanwhile, Carey was also involved in the debate over the nature and purpose of the Company’s patronage of education. In 1813 Lord Minto, in his last speech before Fort William College, vigorously defended the programme of the classical Orientalists. Carey was then the only European teaching at the college who advocated a “vernacularist” position and his June 1814 “Plan for instructing Native Inhabitants of India in European Sciences” is interesting not only for revealing the beginnings of an educational philosophy but also as the first programme for mass education in India<sup>37</sup>. Carey drew up a comprehensive scheme, including primary and higher education, along

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37. West Bengal Record Office, Calcutta, in the Minutes, Proceedings and Correspondence of the General Committee on Public Instruction, 1823-1841; I draw this information from DAVID KOPF, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: the dynamics of Indian modernization, 1773-1835*, Berkeley, 1969, p. 149.

with the practical financial means for achieving it. It is noteworthy that his planned curriculum emphasized science far more than any other subject – including religion. The Orientalist party maintained control of Fort William College, despite Bentinck's plans to close it; until 1830. The official resolution of 4th May declared that from the beginning of the following month the professorships, both European and native, would be abolished and lectures discontinued. Within two months Carey submitted a counter-proposal, that the Council should persuade Bentinck to allow Serampore College to continue "Fort William's species of instruction", and stated that Serampore was prepared to offer "a series of lectures conducted on the same principle which regulated the lectures delivered at Fort William College"<sup>38</sup>.

Carey was also the first in India to publish books on science and natural history, and to make a systematic survey of agriculture. By 1798 he had already begun to compile a classified natural history of Bengal<sup>39</sup>. His first article in *Asiatick Researches* was on agriculture<sup>40</sup>. For many years he corresponded with William Roxburgh, the Superintendent of the Botanic Garden in Calcutta, early on sending him from Bhutan a new species of *sāl*, which Roxburgh named after him *Careya* (*Careya herbacea* Roxb.)<sup>41</sup>. When Roxburgh returned to England, Carey edited and published his *Hortus Bengalensis*, and after his death did the same for his *Flora Indica*, published at Serampore in 1820 and 1824, in association with Nathaniel Wallich, Roxburgh's successor at the Botanic Garden, with whom he also

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38. For further details see KOPF, *British Orientalism*, pp. 232-3.

39. Letter to Mr Sutcliffe, dated 16 January 1798 (BMS MSS India, Serampore, Letters of Carey and others).

40. "Remarks on the State of Agriculture, in the District of Dinājpur", *Asiatick Researches* 10, 1808, pp. 1-26. He also contributed "An account of the funeral ceremonies of a Burman Priest" (giving an eye-witness account "as communicated by my son, Mr Felix Carey, who resides at Rangoon, and was an eye-witness thereto") to *Asiatick Researches* 12, 1816, pp. 186-191.

41. Carey himself refers to this, for example in a letter to Ryland (Calcutta, Dec. 10th 1811): «The species found by me, from which the Genus was named, viz. *C. herbacea*, seldom produces seeds, ... I may however perhaps succeed in getting seeds of the other two species, viz. *C. arborea*, and *C. spherica*». The *Careya arborea* is widespread (Hindī *kumbh*), while the *Careya sphaerica* is found in the Chittagong hills.

engaged in extensive correspondence<sup>42</sup>. He provided a twelve-page introduction to the *Hortus Bengalensis*, in which he detailed Roxburgh's services to the Botanic Garden and something of its history and usefulness (together with notes about methods to transfer specimens to it) and introduced the catalogue itself, which he notes as describing 1,963 plants.

The depth of Carey's personal interest in natural history is reflected in his correspondence, for example:

I may mention a thing which I have long designed, but, for want of funds have never been able to accomplish. I suppose the expense of doing it might be thirty rupees per month. I have always had a strong turn for natural history, and know nothing more fit to relax the mind after close application to other things. I have long wished to employ a person to paint the natural history of India, the vegetable productions excepted, which Dr. Roxburgh has been about for several years. The birds, insects, lizards, fishes, and serpents (many of the last have been drawn by Dr. Buchanan and Dr. Russell, with descriptions) would be amusing, would take little time, and might be of use. I could do it for that sum, and indeed intend to employ my own little property for that purpose, as soon as it can be spared from the family<sup>43</sup>.

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42. *Hortus Bengalensis, or a Catalogue of the plants growing in the Honourable East India Company's botanic garden at Calcutta*, Serampore, printed at the Mission Press, 1814, iv, xii, 105 pp. *Flora Indica; or, Descriptions of Indian plants*, by the late William Roxburgh, 2 volumes, Sérampore, 1820-24. However, when a second edition in three volumes was published in 1832 (Serampore: printed for W. Thacker and co. Calcutta and Parbury, Allen and co. London), Wallich's additions were omitted since Roxburgh's family had been unable to seek permission to reprint them (cf. "Advertisement" prefacing vol. I of this edition). In a letter to Dr Ryland (Serampore, July 6, 1834, quoted by EUSTACE CAREY, *Memoir*, p. 558), Carey refers to this task, as well as to another: «The editing of Roxburgh's *Flora Indica*, the second volume of which is just finished, though comparatively a light thing, takes up some time. While I was confined at home, I was, on the departure of the president of the Agricultural Society of India, unanimously elected to the presidentship; and on a representation being officially made to government two years ago, that the scarcity of timber was such that it was feared there soon would be great difficulty in supplying the wants of the commissariat, I was appointed a member of a committee to inquire into and take measures for remedying the evil. This is called the Plantation Committee, and it has lately added much to my load of labour».

43. Letter to Andrew Fuller, Sept. 7, 1803 (quoted from EUSTACE CAREY, *Memoir*, p. 462).

Carey took the initiative in forming an Agricultural and Horticultural Society, issuing a prospectus on 15 April 1820 (after securing the support of Lady Hastings), on 14th September 1820; two years later he was elected a Fellow of the Linnæan Society in London and a member of both the Geological and the Royal Horticultural Society. In 1833 he was elected President of the Agricultural Society of India and was chosen as a member of a committee to investigate for the government plans to plant new forests.

All of this was achieved in addition to a demanding schedule of translating the Bible into the various languages of India and beyond and of other forms of missionary activity<sup>44</sup>. However, our concern here is with the other sides of Carey's activities. What is the measure of his achievement there? From its inception the College of Fort William developed as both a centre of publication and a teaching institution. It became a forum where British and Indian scholars collaborated and where in particular, under the leadership of William Carey, paṇḍits and munshis began to shape Bengali prose. There has been considerable argument over whether Carey or Rammohun Roy was the father of Bengali prose. While we must bear in mind that the kind of Bengali prose current by the middle of the nineteenth century was not that of either, there can be little doubt that Carey played an important part in this, primarily through his production of teaching materials for Fort William. The sheer variety of the materials so produced is impressive in itself; while much was produced by the paṇḍits under his charge, Carey deserves credit for instigating and encouraging the substantial amount produced. Equally, the printing activities at Serampore certainly contributed to the standardisation of the language. The founding of the College of Fort William and the start of the Mission Press at Serampore in the same year, 1800, were a major turning point in the development of Bengali.

It is interesting to realise how soon Carey came to consider that an adequate knowledge of Sanskrit was essential both to his linguistic

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44. By the time of Carey's death in 1834, the whole Bible had been issued in six complete translations and the whole New Testament in 23 more, with various parts of the Bible available in about ten other languages.

endeavours and to a proper understanding of Indian culture in its major aspects. His Sanskrit grammar and dictionary were pioneering works and attest an interest in the language which goes well beyond the purely practical; indeed, some of his remarks reveal a distinct feeling for the language. The edition and translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, undertaken jointly with Marshman, can claim not only substantial priority – the next publication of more than a short extract was the similarly incomplete text with Latin translation by A.W. von Schlegel in 1829-38 – but also greater significance as a work of scholarship than it has so far been accorded. Its authors also record that it was undertaken in order to provide the public with some insight into the mythology and customs of Hindus. In general, it is fair to say, Carey and his colleagues had no desire to assimilate Indian culture to that of Europe and indeed were more concerned with the sympathetic presentation of Indian culture to the western world.

His publishing of grammars or dictionaries in several other languages must also be reckoned a considerable achievement for the period, even if many of them were superceded before very long because of the rapid progress in European understanding of the languages. His botanical activities and in particular his editing of Roxburgh's works have often been passed over but were also valuable in their time. Above all, the sheer volume of the scholarly publications for which he was responsible as part or sole author, editor or instigator was a notable achievement and one which had particular value at such a relatively early stage in the development of Indology.